

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 04864 171200Z
ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, SNAR, CASC, TU
SUBJECT: DEATH PENALTY REDUCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT IN DRUG CASE

REF: A) ISTANBUL 4244 B) IZMIR 0408

1. TRIAL IN IZMIR OF TWO YOUNG WEST GERMANS ON DRUG CHARGE HAS BEEN GIVEN BIG PLAY IN ISTANBUL EDITIONS OF NEWSPAPERS. CHARGED WITH HAVING 30 KILOS OF HASHISH CONCEALED IN THEIR CAR, THE TWO DEFENDANTS, A BROTHER AND SISTER, RECEIVED LIFE IMPRISONMENT AND 16-YEAR SENTENCES RESPECTIVELY (REF B). CASE SEEMS TO US OF INTEREST ON TWO COUNTS.

2. ALTHOUGH DEATH PENALTY WAS ASSESSED, JUDGES FOUND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR GIVING LESSER, ALTHOUGH SEVERE, SENTENCES. (THE COURT, FOR EXAMPLE, TOOK INTO ACCOUNT THE FACT THAT THE GIRL WAS A MINOR AT THE TIME OF THE OFFENSE.) REDUCTION OF DEATH SENTENCE IN THIS CASE, REINFORCES VIEW REPORTED (REF A) THAT THIS IS BECOMING PRACTICE IN TURKISH JUDICIAL SYSTEM.
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THUS IT APPEARS DECISION TO REDUCE DEATH PENALTY TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR ISTANBUL AIRPORT TERRORISTS WAS NOT NECESSARILY INDICATION OF LENIENCY, BUT REFLECTS GENERAL TREND WITHIN COURT SYSTEM.

3. ON CONSULAR SIDE, DEATH SENTENCE COMMUTED TO LONG

PRISON TERM IS REMINDER THAT TURKISH AUTHORITIES TAKE DRUG
OFFENSES VERY SERIOUSLY AND THOSE CONVICTED OF VIOLATING THESE
LAWS, WHATEVER THEIR NATIONALITY, PAY A HEAVY PENALTY.
THIS EXAMPLE DRAMATIZES THE NEED TO IMPRESS UPON AMERICAN
CITIZENS COMING TO TURKEY THE PERIL THEY RUN FOR COMMITTING
DRUG VIOLATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY.

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